Objective Statement
Prepress Electronic Communications Architecture and Network
P&PG Objective Number Two, Milestone Number Three

I. ***Activity This Period***: Activity this period has been directed to assessing current capabilities in light of projected future requirements. We have only begun to correlate information from Milestones One and Two which should give us a good handle on where P&PG technology is today and where we will need to go to in the future to support our customers. *Preliminary* conclusions indicate there soon may be a significant gap between our capabilities and the capabilities many of our customers will expect in the near future. As a short-term solution, we installed a Personal Computer (PC) interface between the Office of Current Production and Analytic Support (CPAS) and the Prepress Composition network. This should help stem the tide *temporarily*—giving us some breathing room until a better solution is available.

II. ***Problems Encountered:*** (1) Many of the customers interviewed/surveyed in Milestone Two are still unsure of their future direction as far as communicating text and/or images to P&PG. There are few constants which will help us determine customer's requirements. Most customers are, or will soon be using Personal Computer (PC) based platforms for their work—this should help us. At least the hardware will be somewhat "standard." (2) Our current composition systems are somewhat unique and proprietary making communications with dissimilar networks difficult. Many communication vendors contacted never heard of Atex, Xyvision and Shaffstall. Most of the vendors had trouble understanding our configuration and didn't have much experience with publishing or composition system applications. (3) Our resources have been diverted from this Objective to work on other priority projects such as the PC interface mentioned above.

III. ***Plans for Next Period:*** Continue to assess current capabilities in light of future and projected requirements. Work on possible future configurations related to communications and our Prepress Composition network.

SUMMARY OF CURRENT COMMUNICATION CAPABILITIES

Wang

A 2400-baud bisynchronous link with a Wang 7525 word processing system (WPS), which provides input from customers' Wang WPS diskettes in WPS format only or online telecommunications from other Wang systems in the agency through VM. We also have the capability to receive VM Script files and write Wang WPS eight-inch diskettes through our Wang system.

Customer support issues anticipated in the future:

- Wang WPS systems will no longer be supported
- Parts and service are difficult to obtain

Shaffstall

A Shaffstall 5000 Media Conversion System converts to Atex format a variety of customers' diskettes. For example, an IBM PC diskette utilizing MSWORD software is communicated through a 9600 baud asynchronous link directly to the Atex system.

Customer support issues anticipated in the future:

- The 5000 system is no longer being made and updated software is limited.
- P&PG does not have a back up system for this type of input.

Personal Computer Interface with the Atex System

This capability came online 1 June 1989. It appears to have great potential, but we need to develop and fine tune procedures and translations before can consider this link operational on a routine basis. This interface also provides an alternate path to VM and the future Directorate of Intelligence (DI) Local Area Networks (LAN).

Customer support issues anticipated in the future:

- Customers *very* interested in this capability. Many of them will expect us to return their finished publication data base as a matter of routine.

Office of Information Technology link from VM1

A 9600-baud bisynchronous link with the Office of Information Technology (OIT) VM system, which allows the input of customers' SCRIPT files and Wang documents.

Customer support issues anticipated in the future:

- This link utilizes an exec called PPDETEC which is outdated, OIT is relucant to provide support for this exec as far as updates or added features. In many cases OIT documentation does not even acknowledge that this link exist.

Magtape

Currently P&PG has four nine-track magnetic tape drives which will accept customers' tapes at 1600 BPI, EBCDIC format. Most customers have replaced this system with new technology, however, there are a limited number of publications which are input using this method. We also output finished publications to magnetic tape whenever a customer request this type of output.

Customer support issues anticipated in the future:

- We expect the need for magnetic tape input and output to be reduced as the Agency's use of LANs and PC based systems increase.

OCR Scanner

A Dest optical character reader (OCR) is conected to our Atex system via a 1200-baud asynchronous link. This capability will read eight standard typewriter fonts from customers' hard copy.
At present we have a very poor success rate for this type of input. It is rarely used for production.

Customer support issues anticipated in the future:

- As the use of "standard" platforms become more common in the agency this already seldom used method of input will become even less important.